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CIA/RR CB-60-55

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13 December 1960

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CURRENT SUPPORT BRIEF

CHANGES IN BASEMENT AIR RAID SHELTER DESIGN--HUNGARY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This report represents the immediate views of the originating intelligence components of the Office of Research and Reports. Comments are solicited.

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SECRETCHANGES IN BASEMENT AIR RAID SHELTER DESIGN--HUNGARY

According to civil defense literature published during 1960, the construction of air raid shelters under new apartment houses is to be continued in Hungary. Various articles indicate that improvements in construction are contemplated--to be obtained both from native design and Soviet example. The principal changes involved are the strengthening of walls and ceilings in air raid shelters, the making of unspecified adjustments in internal partitions, and the building of escape tunnels which end in exit shafts at some distance from the building. Changes in design are attributed to the need for increased shelter strength and for increased shielding from radiation.

Legal directives issued in 1959 are probably the basis for change and continued construction. 1/ A Hungarian civil defense official, speaking at a city conference in January, 1960, spoke of the need for continued air defense measures, including the construction of air raid shelters. A second official discussed the requirements for effective shelter against "atomic fall-out." Both speakers stressed the importance of incorporating shelter-building programs into long-range plans for urban development. 2/

A Hungarian publication of March, 1960, contained an article on the result of "the 1959 air raid shelter plan competition." 3/ The article contained several significant statements. It referred to the 1959 issuance of new specifications for shelter design 4/ which were said to involve "substantial" changes. The new specifications are not spelled out, but the ensuing discussion refers to the requirements for increased strength and improved shielding from radiation which necessitate thickening the walls and ceilings in the design of air raid shelters. 5/ Other alterations in design were related to the provision of emergency exit tunnels and to a change in the construction of internal partitions. The accomplishments of the contest were said to be important because of the need for shelter designs to be used in apartment dwellings under the "15-year housing development plan." 6/ This plan projects the construction of 1,000,000 dwelling units in 15 years--60 percent of which will be government housing. 7/

A Hungarian air-defense magazine of September, 1960, carried an article on air raid shelters which indicates that the Hungarians are planning to incorporate Soviet escape tunnels from under-building shelters. Earlier, emergency exits from Hungarian basement shelters were described as shafts next to the basement wall. Late Soviet designs place the exit from escape tunnels at a distance from the building greater than one-half the distance from the ground to the eaves. A gravel blast-trap is sometimes included in the exit shaft. The article included the statement that, "The national economy earmarks considerable funds for erecting modern shelters and emergency exits," and also enjoins the reader to become knowledgeable about "technical equipment." 8/

It is concluded that the Hungarians are making plans to include improved basement shelter in some new government-constructed housing units. No information is available as to the number of shelters to be provided during the projected construction of 150,000 government dwelling units in the period 1961-1965. However, the open publication of civil defense planning information, which is not usual in the Soviet Bloc, implies that shelter construction will be on such a scale that it will be difficult to conceal.

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13 December 1960

~~CIA/RR CB 60-55~~

Page 2

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Sources:

1. CIA. FDD Summary no 2648, 20 Jul 60, p. 56. C.
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3. US Joint Publications Research Service. 5225, The 1959 Air-
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7. US Joint Publications Research Service. 2722, Selected Eco-
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3. US Joint Publications Research Service. 5225, The 1959 Air-raid Shelter
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4. Ibid., p. 1. U.
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(Title)

HUNGARY

13 Dec 60

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